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CIA sack two for sale of detonators to Libya

By NICHOLAS COMFORT in Washington

ADML STANSFIELD TURNER, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has personally sacked two employees for "lack of good judgment" in helping former CIA officers obtain sensitive explosive devices and other equipment for sale overseas.

He told the Senate Intelligence Committee yesterday that while neither of the men, described as middle-level employees, had done anything illegal, they had displayed "insensitivity to the implications (of their actions) for the intelligence community."

To drive home his point that no form of laxity by CIA men could be tolerated, he posted news of the dismissals on all the agency's notice boards, sent copies to every foreign post and called his top officials together to explain his action.

"This business is so delicate, so sensitive, that it is important we treat our responsibilities with respect and loyalty, that loyalty to the agency and the country come first."

Watergate reporter

"There will be no mixing of private and official affairs—that is oil and water."

News of the sackings was broken in the *Washington Post* yesterday by Bob Woodward, one of the two reporters who played a major part in exposing the Watergate scandal which drove President Nixon from office.

But Adml. Turner broke with CIA tradition first in agreeing to discuss his action with the paper before publication and then by issuing a public statement yesterday and answering the Senate committee's questions on the record.

The investigation which led to the sackings began a fortnight ago after reports appeared of the alleged activities of a former CIA man, Mr Edwin Wilson, who now works as a consultant in Washington, in association with other men once employed by the agency.

Mr Wilson, who denies the allegations against him, is said to have contracted to supply the Libyan government of Col Gaddafi with 500,000 detonators so sophisticated that they can be timed to explode in a year's time, and to have smuggled 500 of them to Libya last summer.

The FBI is investigating these allegations, and may also look into claims that explosives bought by Mr Wilson for a foreign customer inadvertently found their way to Right-wing Cubans who are thought to have carried out the assassination in Washington last year of Dr Orlando Letelier, the former Chilean foreign minister.

The *Washington Post* said that the two sacked CIA men, whom Adml Turner refuses to identify, introduced Mr Wilson to the firms supplying the equipment, leaving the impression that the order was being placed by the agency itself.

One was said to have helped him obtain the detonators, and the other to have assisted him in selling other material to a different foreign government. They are not thought to have conspired together.

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